

## The "OPTIC" Method of Visual Analysis

**O = Overview:** What is happening in the picture? Summarize the "action" of the visual without analyzing its meaning yet. This is equivalent to the "paraphrase" part of a written text-based analysis. Your statement should be a complete sentence that describes the visual with enough detail so that someone not looking at the visual would have a general idea of what is contained in the visual.

**P = Parts of the picture:** Break the picture down into sections. Describe the placement of objects on the canvas. Name **everything** that you see. Describe color, lighting, and placement, attitude, sizes, orientations, and movement in the image.

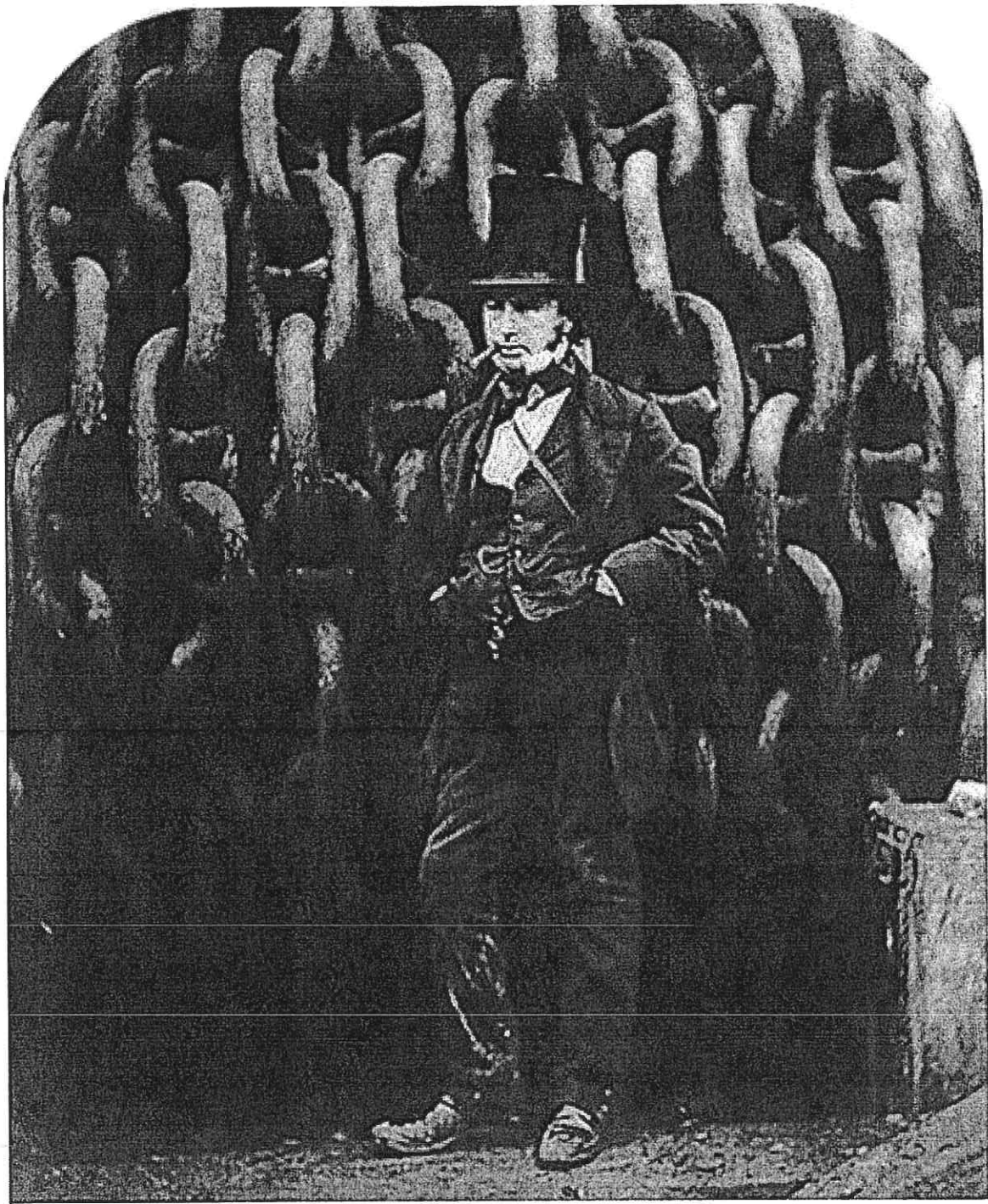
**T = Title:** Write down the title of the work, **and** the full name of the artist. What does the title tell you about the picture? How much does it add to what you understand --or do not understand --about the picture? *Explain your answers.*

**I = Images and Interrelationships:** Analyze the relationships in the picture. *How* do objects or people or colors relate to each other in the picture? What clues to the message or argument are these relationships giving you? What seems to be the most important "relationship" in the picture?

**C = Conclusion:** Draw a conclusion to the meaning or message of the picture based on what you have viewed and discussed as a group. Essentially, **what is the argument** the artist is trying to convey? Compose at least 2 phrases showing a relationship between the image phrases and the title of the visuals and should have written one to two complete sentences expressing this summation of relationships.

### Group Mission:

- You will analyze each of the OPTIC components of the painting **together as a whole group to get a group consensus of the painting.**
- Then, **each** member of the group will be required to pick **1 or 2** of the elements of the OPTIC to write a complete, detailed response to what that component is requiring as a response.
- Your written responses will be combined as a group to turn in for the written assessment of this assignment. Write in formal voice with an eye to detail and analysis, as requested.
- Your group may have to orally present its OPTIC findings to the class, and "The Argument of the Art." The member responsible for writing the individual OPTIC component or components will be the one presenting that component of the painting.



### Sample Visual Analysis using OPTIC

#### Overview:

This is a photograph of a man in 1853 standing in front of large boat chains on a dock.

Title: "Isambard Kingdom Brunel and Launching Chains of the 'Great Eastern' "

Photographer: Robert Howlett

## **Images / Interrelationships:**

### Contrast of great / little repeated through. . .

- ✓ Ship/man
- ✓ Boat chains/man
- ✓ Boat chains/watch chain

### Power repeated through. . .

- ✓ Man standing in front of chains
- ✓ Dock strong enough to hold up chains
- ✓ Boots – worn, dirty, used

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### Success repeated through. . .

- ✓ Large cigar image of success
- ✓ Suit is an image of success, yet comfortable in setting of work/dirt
- ✓ Man wearing a suit for business yet jumps in to get “down and dirty” when required
- ✓ Tophat

### Arrogance shown. . .

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- ✓ In man's pose/disinterest
  - ✓ In man's wearing suit in place of filth
  - ✓ In taking a picture in front of the “great chains”

### Conclusions ( suggested ):

- ✓ A man's impact can be much more immense than what would be judged by his size alone.
- ✓ A man's power is not relative to the forces that get in his way.
- ✓ Man can overcome obstacles just by the sheer power of his will.
- ✓ A man sets his own limits relative to what he believes he can conquer.

